

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 01076 090924Z

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ACTION OPIC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2440

INFO USDOC WASHDC

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS KUWAIT 1076

DEPARTMENT PASS OPIC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV KU

SUBJECT: TRIANGULAR INVESTMENT MISSION

1. OPIC TRIANGULAR INVESTMENT MISSION TO THE ARAB NATIONS (TIMAN) ARRIVED KUWAIT THURSDAY NIGHT FEB 20 AND DEPARTED SATURDAY AFTERNOON FEB 22. FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES MISSION VISIT IN KUWAIT LIMITED TO SATURDAY MORNING SINCE BUSINESS NOT REPEAT NOT CONDUCTED IN KUWAIT ON FRIDAY.

2. OFFICIALS OF KUWAIT MIN. OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND KUWAIT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SCHEDULED FOUR APPOINTMENTS FOR TIMAN. FIRST MEETING WAS WITH NEWLY-APPOINTED MIN. OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, UNDERSECRETARY AND ASSISTANT UNDERSECRETARY FOR INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS. OTHER MEETINGS HELD WITH GENERAL MANAGER KUWAIT INVESTMENT CO., HAMAD AL-BAHAR; CHAIRMAN INDUSTRIAL BANK OF KUWAIT, MOHAMED AL-SHAREKH; ADVISOR TO KUWAIT FOREIGN TRADING, CONTRACTING & INVESTMENT CO., CHRISTOPHER ARNANDER. APPOINTMENT WITH KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT CO. CANCELLED DUE TO CONFLICT IN KIIC
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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 01076 090924Z

SCHEDULE. SEVERAL MISSION MEMBERS HELD INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH

THEIR COMPANIES' REPRESENTATIVES OR WITH LOCAL FIRMS INTERESTED IN JOINT VENTURES.

3. A FRIDAY TOUR OF KUWAIT AND NEIGHBORING INDUSTRIAL AREAS WAS SCHEDULED FOR TIMAN AND ABOUT 10 MEMBERS TOOK PART. TIMAN RECEIVED BRIEFING FROM AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY ECON/COMMERCIAL SECTION AT RESIDENCE FRIDAY EVENING. SEVERAL SATURDAY LUNCHEON APPOINTMENTS WERE CANCELLED WHEN GROUP MOVED ORIGINAL 6:10 P.M. DEPARTURE TIME TO 3 P.M. OPIC PRESIDENT MARSHALL MAYS HAD PRIVATE APPOINTMENTS WITH ABDULAZIZ AL-SAGAR, HIGHLY RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL PRESIDENT OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND WITH RICHARD WILLIAMSON, ADVISOR TO KUWAIT INVESTMENT CO.

4. COMMENT: TIMAN COMPANIES AND THEIR REPS WERE A GOOD CROSS SECTION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS WHICH MIGHT HAVE APPEALED TO KUWAITIS HAD THERE BEEN SUFFICIENT TIME. COMPANIES THEMSELVES AND RANK OF REPS DID NOT GENERATE AS MUCH ENTHUSIASM HERE AS SEEMS TO BE THE CASE IN OTHER TIMAN COUNTRIES SINCE KUWAITIS REGULARLY SEE TOP OFFICIALS FROM MANY LEADING AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AND JAPANESE FIRMS. ONE LOCAL OFFICIAL WHO MET WITH TIMAN TOLD EMBOFF HIS AGENCY HAD BRIEFED SIMILAR GROUPS OF WEST GERMAN AND JAPANESE IN PREVIOUS TWO WEEKS.

5. SOME TIMAN MEMBERS TOLD EMBOFFS THEY REGRETTED NOT STAYING LONGER AND THIS WAS RELAYED TO KUWAITIS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE ORIGINALLY PLANNED SHORT STAY PLUS LAST MINUTE SCHEDULE CHANGE REINFORCED KUWAITI SUSPICIONS THAT TIMAN WAS NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN DOING BUSINESS WITH KUWAIT. LACK OF INTEREST WAS PROBABLY RECIPROCATED BY SOME MISSION MEMBERS WHO EXPECTED BUT DID NOT FIND "RED CARPET" TREATMENT AFFORDED THEM ELSEWHERE. HOWEVER, SEVERAL MISSION MEMBERS OBVIOUSLY REALIZED POTENTIAL EXISTING HERE AND MADE FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS IN THEIR TALKS WITH KUWAITIS. THEY HAVE PROMISED TO RETURN FOR LONGER VISITS AND MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS. EMBASSY HERE SINCERELY HOPES THIS IS POSSIBLE.
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